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UNCLAS LJUBLJANA 000206

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/NCE  
DEPT FOR OES/CASHDOLLAR  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST FOR POSNER-MULLEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EFIS](#) [SENV](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: "WE DON'T HAVE WHALES, BUT WE WANT TO  
JOIN THE IWC ANYWAY"

REF: SECSTATE 52722

1. (SBU) Econoff and Econ Specialist delivered reftel talking points 30 March to Emil Ferjancic, Post's chief interlocutor at the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). Ferjancic stated Slovenia is considering joining the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and ratifying the Convention. He said that Slovenia has been demarched by other EU member states on the same topic. Ferjancic said the MOE feels it "has to" support the IWC and was already moving in that direction prior to the delivery of reftel points. He noted, however, that while the Minister for the Environment, Janez Podobnik, would support Slovenia's membership, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) may balk at the costs.

2. (SBU) Econoff also delivered reftel points 31 March to Jasna Lhotka, Head of the MFA's Division for International Organizations. Lhotka, who has been in close contact with Ferjancic on this matter, told Econoff that Slovenia "should ratify" the Convention in order to "contribute to the conservation" of whales. She said the MFA has been pushing the government to ratify the Convention "for years" and seemed pleased that some action was finally being taken. Despite the lack of a direct interest in Slovenia due to the fact that whales are not regularly present in Slovenian waters, Lhotka said given Slovenia's active participation in other conventions to protect endangered species, Slovenia needed to be a part of the IWC as well. She said Germany, the UK and New Zealand have all encouraged Slovenia to ratify the Convention. However, Lhotka echoed Ferjancic's concern that the MOF may attempt to block the ratification due to the costs involved.

3. (SBU) Comment: The specter of the budget once again proves to be a problem for Slovenia. The budget deficit is a growing concern and one of the major challenges facing the GOS as it attempts to adhere to the Maastricht criteria. With adoption of the Euro as the primary economic goal of Slovenia over the coming two years, it often seems that all attention at the MOF is focused on deficit reduction. However, even if the MOF ultimately does give its support, actual ratification is far from certain. Even with clear and strong support at the Ministerial level, whether or not the Parliament will ratify a convention which the casual Slovene observer might question the logic for remains to be seen.  
End Comment.  
ROBERTSON

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